United Nations A/C.3/65/SR.3

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session
Official Records

Distr.: General
11 February 2011
English
Original: French

Third Committee

Summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 5 October 2010, at 10 a.m.

Chair:	Mr. Al-Shami (Vice-Chair)	(Yemen)
later:	Ms. Ploder (Vice-Chair)	(Austria)
later:	Mr. Tommo Monthe	(Cameroon)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*) (A/65/89, A/65/307 and A/65/336)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/65/168 and A/65/174)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/65/173 and A/65/393)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/65/157 and A/65/158)

(d) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all (*continued*) (A/65/172)

1. **Mr. Pillay** (Malaysia) said that progress in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly remained hostage to developments in the global economic, financial, fuel and food crises, which delayed and sometimes derailed governments' efforts to achieve economic growth, employment creation and productivity growth, all of which were vital to long-lasting social development. The international community must therefore reaffirm its larger political goals of social development, especially with regard to enhanced international cooperation, the transfer of technology and expertise, and official development assistance. There needed to be a reconfiguration of the global financial and economic architecture to ensure that it was fairer, more equitable, and allowed for a balance between the role of government and the private sector, and a balance between regulation and market-driven approaches. A paradigm shift in the analysis of growth and poverty was also needed; the measurement of poverty as being equal to living on a dollar a day, should be re-examined, while the provision of essential social services needed to be counted and the structural determinants of wealth and income distribution needed to be evaluated. In spite of countries' limited fiscal space, policies were increasingly being introduced to promote both social protection and economic growth. Greater coordination was needed in work related to social development and sustainable economic development, and the role of the Economic and Social Council in that regard should be strengthened through greater cooperation between the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly.

2. By 2030, older persons would account for 15 per cent of Malaysia's population, and his Government would work to ensure that they were able to age with dignity and respect and to lead independent lives as integral members of their families and society. The five-year plan for 2011-2015 placed emphasis on promoting the health of older persons and provided for the establishment of elderly friendly infrastructure; ensuring access to affordable health care; improving financial security and access to employment and housing; mobilizing volunteers to help the elderly, in particular those living alone; and improving access to health care through provision of free transport services.

3. After ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 19 July 2010 and subsequently becoming a party thereto, Malaysia was focusing on better integrating of persons with disabilities into society to enable them to live independent and productive lives and contribute to society. The 2011-2015 five-year plan would provide easy physical access to public transport and buildings and upgrade rehabilitation centres to one-stop service centres which would provide more comprehensive services, including registration of persons with disabilities, disability screening, referral services, vocational training, job placements and information on disabilities. The Government of Malaysia would also seek to provide greater employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, pursue its target of 1 per cent disabled employment in the civil service and look into establishing specialized learning institutions and vocational schools.

4. **Ms. Ojiambo** (Kenya) said that, despite pockets of good news, it had to be acknowledged that the global crises had had a profound impact on social and economic development in several regions, that the number of people living below the poverty line had not really decreased and that many countries had to spend more on humanitarian activities than on programmes to address social inequalities and exclusion, and unemployment, particularly among the youth. Such was the case in Kenya, which had dedicated a sizeable portion of its resources to subsidizing the cost of essential foodstuffs, expanding school feeding programmes and providing financial assistance to the

elderly. Like other developing countries, Kenya was working to put in place policies to foster economic and social development and build an equitable and stable society. It had spent considerable time, effort and resources to develop an enabling political, social, cultural and legal environment for social development; that had led to greater awareness of the need to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms; increased civil society participation and greater transparency in governance. The right of all to education had been enshrined in the new Constitution and there had been increased investment in the Vision 2030 development programme.

5. With regard to the social integration of persons with disabilities, of whom there were around 1.7 million in Kenya, the Government was making efforts to bring the 2003 Disability Act into line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The new Constitution contained provisions relating to access to public transport and buildings; protecting the human rights of persons with disabilities; exemption of persons with disabilities from paying taxes on equipment and facilities that improve their living conditions; and the use of sign language and subtitles in television newscasts and educational programmes. A national disability policy was being finalized.

6. Pursuant to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the Government of Kenya had adopted in May 2009 a national policy on ageing and older persons which was aimed to enable the elderly to remain active and in good health by improving their access to health care, helping families and communities to take care of older people, eliminating discrimination against older people accessing employment, providing training opportunities and improving social services. The new Constitution prohibited age discrimination. The social protection programme put in place by the Government provided an allowance to vulnerable households headed by older persons.

7. Other policies and programmes introduced by the Government of Kenya to alleviate the problems affecting different sections of society included the youth enterprise and women enterprise development funds, which had improved the livelihoods of many families, and the youth employment programme, which offered jobs to young people in community-based projects being undertaken by the various ministries.

8. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic was continuing to take measures aimed at promoting equitable economic development and a better distribution of wealth by addressing the root causes of poverty, with the support of all sectors of society, and by creating jobs for young people. In the context of the country's efforts to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and their social integration, it had hosted the Special Olympics Middle East/North Africa, in which around 2,500 people from 22 countries had participated. The objective of the Games was to foster interaction between persons with disabilities and others, to encourage innovative ideas among young people, to change attitudes towards disabilities and persons with disabilities, and to enable persons with disabilities to be productive.

9. It was unfortunate that the reports of the Secretary-General on social development had failed to mention the adverse impact of foreign occupation and violence on the social development of some countries in the region. The Committee should address the disabilities caused by the use of weapons with long-term effects on life, such as cluster munitions and mines. The international community should also redouble its efforts to eliminate all obstacles preventing peoples living under foreign occupation from exercising their right to social development, in particular their right to self-determination.

10. **Mr. Sebri** (Tunisia) said that the global crises had exacerbated social instability and vulnerability among young people, who were particularly affected by the upsurge in violence and hatred, the imbalance between the North and the South, unemployment, poverty, the denial of the right to self-determination for certain peoples, and the absence of dialogue that aggravated misunderstandings between civilizations and between different segments of society.

11. Young people in Tunisia welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/134 proclaiming 2010 as International Year of Youth under the theme of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. They urged the international community and governments to establish new forms of cooperation based on mutual understanding and enhance the role of young people by tapping their skills and involving them in decision-making processes in all areas, since they accounted for a significant proportion of the population and society.

12. Young Tunisians were proud that their concerns were taken into account in their country's development policies. By lowering the voting age to 18, Tunisia allowed its young people to assume their rightful role, and gave them the opportunity to express their views and to be fully engaged. With the blessing of the President, the youth of Tunisia had engaged in an expanded multilateral dialogue involving young people from all walks of life that had led to the adoption of a national youth charter.

13. Tunisia had developed numerous global initiatives that had gained the support of the international community, including the 2002 initiative concerning the World Solidarity Fund, the 2003 initiative to promote the right of young people to engage in sport and physical exercise and the initiative to proclaim 20 December International Human Solidarity Day. A national youth strategy for the 2009-2014 period had been developed with inputs from young people and other stakeholders from civil society and the private sector. A committee composed of Government, civil society, media and private sector representatives had been established to develop a programme for the observance of the International Year of Youth. A youth parliament had been established, and had met for the first time on 25 July 2010. Legislation on volunteer work had been enacted to encourage young Tunisians to become more involved in volunteer work at both the national and international levels. The youth of Tunisia were now included in official Tunisian delegations to meetings of the United Nations.

14. **Mr. Rutilo** (Argentina) said that the steadily increasing elderly population in the world was expected to exceed one billion by 2025, with the largest increases occurring in developing countries. Given that exponential population increase, it was clear that the very strong sense of intergenerational solidarity in developing countries, should not be seen as the only solution. Millions of older persons throughout the world were being deprived of their rights; suffering from overt or hidden discrimination, isolation, poverty and abuse; and did not have access to social services, health care, information and legal protection. Poverty rates among older persons were alarming. Sixty per cent of persons who had reached legal retirement age did not receive pensions for various reasons, and many persons aged 60 to 65 who had spent their working lives in the informal sector did not have social security coverage. Promoting the social integration of older persons was clearly a task that needed to be tackled by governments.

15. His country was trying to implement social policies that would build an inclusive society in which all citizens made genuine contributions and enjoyed all of their rights. His Government had improved its social security system by increasing the size of retirement pensions and extending the scope of social security coverage. The number of people receiving non-contributory old-age pensions had doubled over the previous five years. They included socially vulnerable persons who lacked the assets and income they needed to survive and could not rely on the support of any relatives.

16. Recognizing that there was no legally binding instrument for the protection of the rights of older persons, the Heads of State and Government of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) had undertaken to submit to the United Nations a proposal for an international convention on the rights of older persons which would clearly set forth those rights and provide for mechanisms that would allow older persons to claim them. His country believed that the role and needs of older persons needed to be more fully taken into account, and urged all Member States to engage relevant national actors in dialogue with a view to producing an international convention on the rights of older persons.

17. **Ms. Vyzinkarova** (Slovakia), speaking on behalf of Slovak youth, said that young people in Slovakia welcomed the proclamation of the International Year of Youth; she then touched on development education in developed countries.

18. Rooted in the values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and cooperation, development education sought to raise awareness of development policies, sustainable human development, the Millennium Development Goals and humanitarian assistance. Development education was key to worldwide poverty eradication efforts, encouraged personal involvement and informed action. Educating young people in developed countries about development should not be merely a matter of making them aware of poverty in the world. Young people needed to be educated about the issue of development so that they could form their own opinion free from the prejudices that were so often associated with the concept of development and humanitarian assistance.

19. *Ms. Ploder (Austria), Vice Chair, took the chair.*

20. She was happy to note that more and more study programmes in that area were being established, and that development education had been included in official curricula. In her country, development education had been incorporated into all levels of education — primary, secondary and university. At the primary level, it was called "global education" and was incorporated into the general curriculum. A creative approach was taken at the secondary level, including initiatives such as an "Afghan day", in Slovak schools with a corresponding, simultaneous "Slovakia day" in Afghan schools. At the university level, although few young people opt to specialize in development studies, a formal course of studies on that topic would be established in 2011 for graduates of law, economics and international relations. She hoped that other countries would follow Slovakia's lead by exposing young people to development education.

21. **Mr. Sardjana** (Indonesia) said that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Millennium Development Goals were complementary instruments for the global mobilization for people-centred development. It was essential to build on the momentum generated by the commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development and the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals. The three pillars of social development — poverty eradication, socially inclusive development and full and decent employment for all — must progress concurrently and in a mutually supportive manner. Stepping up the struggle against illiteracy, which ought to be unheard of but which affected 16 per cent of the worldwide population, should be part of every national education strategy. It was important to encourage the participation of multiple stakeholders.

22. In 2009, his Government had enacted a social welfare law to coordinate development programmes. As part of its medium-term development programme, his Government would accelerate progress on 11 priority programmes to be implemented through 155 action plans with a budget of US$ 12 billion.

23. Since young people accounted for more than a quarter of the Indonesian population, youth-oriented programmes were top priorities. The Law on Youth adopted in 2009 would further promote the active participation of young people in the country's economic, social and political life; their enrolment had improved.

24. Given the important role of women in society, gender equality continued to be mainstreamed in the country's development strategies.

25. With regard to persons with disabilities, it was important to shift from a charity-based to a human rights-based approach. His Government was conducting a campaign to raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities, and was reviewing existing laws with a view to harmonizing them with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Indonesia would ratify in 2011.

26. Indonesia, which was home to 18.5 million older persons, was working, through its National Commission for Older Persons, to implement policies in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

27. Since globalization and climate change could affect the social fabric of countries, it was important to continue to strengthen the three pillars of social development and equip citizens to meet new challenges and continue to contribute actively to society. The United Nations system had an important role to play in fulfilling the commitments made 15 years previously.

28. **Ms. Kursh** (Israel), welcoming the Secretary-General's recent reports relating to social development, said that the role of the State, civil society and the private sector with respect to young people, older persons, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, should be to fully integrate them into society and to provide them with opportunities to contribute to society according to their abilities throughout their lives. Older persons should be allowed to continue making their own contributions to society while living in their homes for as long as possible. Her country was one of the few nations that enshrined in law the legal obligations of family members towards the care of elderly relatives, while also providing for financial support to the family and protection for the employment rights of family members who cared for elderly relatives. It was also important for persons with disabilities to be able to contribute to their societies, which meant addressing the issues of accessibility, public awareness and education, and economic incentives. People who faced "double exclusion", such

as the disabled elderly, highlighted the need for inclusive policies. Her Government remained committed to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities through legislation, education and partnerships with civil society.

29. Referring to one of the recommendations in the Report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, she said governments should ensure that all members of society had the opportunity to contribute to society and were accepted and recognized for their unique talents.

30. **Mr. Al-Obaidi** (Iraq) said that the goal of social development was social justice, the reduction in income inequality and poverty eradication. His Government was doing its utmost to create an economic and socio-political climate that was conducive to peace and stability, which were vital to ensuring human rights and human development. The International Compact with Iraq had been put in place to facilitate economic transition, support good governance and help solve Iraq's economic, political and security problems in cooperation with the international community.

31. In the wake of the profound social and economic changes that Iraq had gone through in the previous few years, the Government had set some key priorities for the promotion of genuine social development for the benefit of all Iraqis, who had suffered from war and economic sanctions for so long. Education, health and social protection were emphasized. More funds had been allocated to education with emphasis on training and the building of schools across the country. In the area of health, efforts had been focused on providing basic health services and increasing the number of doctors in family medical centres and health programmes; that had resulted in a significant decrease in maternal and infant mortality. In order to improve living standards, the Iraqi Government had created a system of monthly pensions and benefits for the poorest families, older persons, women, widows, divorcees and the unemployed. Some job creation and free training programmes were offered to young people all over the country. A social security system for workers had been established under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour. The Government had also done its utmost to increase wage levels in both urban and rural areas.

32. One of the priorities was to create a safe and stable environment that would permit the use of all of Iraq's resources, create favourable living conditions for the Iraqi people and ensure social development by combating poverty. He hoped that those programmes would receive assistance and support from international organizations.

33. **Ms. Sodov** (Mongolia) said that the recent crises had had far-reaching repercussions on economic and social development and that countries were just beginning to overcome them. In Mongolia, the rate of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals was 66 per cent as a result of their integration into national short-, medium- and long-term policies. Much remained to be done, however, in the areas of poverty reduction, gender equality and environmental sustainability.

34. Her Government had fully embraced the thinking set out in the Report on the World Social Situation 2010: Rethinking Poverty, which it had placed at the heart of its policy. Revenue from the country's burgeoning mining sector would be invested in education and health care. Furthermore, a Human Development Fund had been established to distribute national wealth to citizens of Mongolia in the form of regular allowances and health-care, education and housing benefits. A new civil registration system had been launched in July 2010 and a census was planned for November to ensure fairness and equality of those allocations.

35. In line with its policies to promote social development, the Government of Mongolia had defined vocational training as one of its priorities in view of the acute deficit of skilled labour in the mining sector. An agreement had recently been concluded with the management of the Oyu Tolgoi mega-mining project to train 3,000 currently unemployed persons at vocational training centres.

36. Welcoming the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade, she stressed that although Mongolia exhibited high literacy levels, the related literacy skills of the population were inadequate. Mongolia had therefore been pleased to participate in the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Mongolia would

introduce a draft biennial resolution entitled "United Nations Literary Decade: Education for All" that would call on Member States, development partners, international donors, the private sector and civil society to scale up literacy efforts and reflect on post-2012 strategy.

37. As a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 64/136 relating to the proclamation of the International Year of Cooperatives, adopted in February 2010 at Mongolia's initiative, Mongolia would introduce a draft resolution entitled "Cooperatives in social development".

38. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that social integration constituted one of the three priority areas identified at the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995 and that the family, which provided the first level of social integration, was an institution that needed strengthening. In recent years, he emphasized, the global financial and economic meltdown had negatively affected investments in such development, thereby aggravating poverty in developing countries.

39. The unprecedented floods that had struck Pakistan in late July 2010 had had disastrous effects on agriculture, services, industry and communications. Reconstruction, which would be a long-term task, would have an impact on economic recovery efforts and the achievement of social development targets.

40. Pakistan was undergoing demographic transition; by 2030 it would have 50 million people in the economically productive age group. For that reason, the Pakistani Government was investing in human resources.

41. Pakistan had adopted an integrated and holistic approach with a view to reducing poverty, providing social protection to the poor and achieving social integration of marginalized groups. A social protection programme had been set up. A new employment commission had been established to create new jobs in the public and private sectors. A poverty alleviation fund had been established to make microfinance and other financial services available to the poor with the help of civil society. A plan of action had been elaborated by the Ministry of Women Development for empowering women and promoting gender equality. A social insurance system had been assisting the aged, the physically challenged and widows. Pakistan had also signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and developed a related national plan of action. A national commission on minorities and district interfaith harmony committees had been established to involve minorities in decision-making.

42. In the wake of the multiple crises faced by the world, the commitment of the international community to social development had become more important than ever.

43. **Ms. Boiko** (Ukraine), associating herself with the statement made by the Presidency of the European Union, said that her country had chosen the path of social dialogue and constructive cooperation with trade unions and workers in order to revive the economy and minimize the impact of the crisis while avoiding a decline in living standards. The Government of Ukraine had launched a set of economic reforms aimed at maintaining growth, creating jobs and improving the living standards of Ukrainians. In collaboration with its social partners, it was elaborating a draft programme on overcoming poverty, based in particular on the Global Job Pact. With stabilization of the State budget, revival of the labour market and the lowering of unemployment in 2010 as its main priorities, it was interested in cooperating with the International Labour Organization within the framework of the Decent Work Country Programme.

44. Ukraine viewed positively the outcome of the forty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development, which had encouraged the adoption of concrete actions to ensure social integration at the national and international levels. In view of the urgent need to overcome the social consequences of the global crisis, it welcomed the consideration of that issue and the choice of the priority theme "Eradication of poverty" for the forty-ninth session of the Commission. Ukraine was committed to international cooperation aimed at creating a more competitive and dynamic economy based on sustainable development, social cohesion and social integration for all.

45. **Mr. El Mkhantar** (Morocco) said that his country welcomed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly" (A/65/168). At the World Summit, held in Copenhagen in 1995, the international community had adopted a comprehensive vision and a holistic approach that made social integration the cornerstone of the process

of building values and social institutions that would ensure equitable access to basic social services for disadvantaged social groups and the integration of those groups into the social fabric.

46. Within that framework, the challenges to social development remained dependent on the efforts undertaken and the financial means made available to governments to enable them to honour their commitments in that area. Citing the Secretary-General's report, he stated that the support that a conducive international environment and enhanced international cooperation could provide to national efforts towards promoting social integration could not be underestimated and that international commitments in the areas of official development assistance, debt relief, market access and capacity-building for developing countries must be fulfilled.

47. Fifteen years after the Copenhagen Summit, it was time to assess the efforts made and the commitments honoured and to redefine the plans and strategies of economic and social development so as to take into account the social impact of the economic and financial crisis.

48. As pointed out by King Mohammed VI at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, the achievement of those goals by 2015 posed a major challenge that must be addressed and a responsibility that the advanced countries must assume, by living up to their development financing commitments, and developing countries, by placing the Millennium Development Goals at the centre of their national policies.

49. Morocco took the needs of the most disadvantaged social strata into account in its economic and social development plans. In 2005 it had launched a national initiative for human development and cooperated with some African countries, in particular Burkina Faso. Its commitment in the area of poverty eradication was consistent with the principles of the United Nations relating to economic, social and cultural rights, and it collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), among others.

50. Morocco had adopted a number of measures with regard to persons with disabilities. In 2003 it had passed a law on their access to information, communications, transport and public spaces and in 2008, it had issued a ministerial decree concerning their employment. It had also created a national fund for the promotion of their rights. Morocco had also launched important reforms in favour of women's rights and their economic, social and political empowerment. With respect to the elderly, the Government had made an effort to improve their living conditions and established a strategic plan for 2008-2012 regarding community social services for vulnerable persons.

51. **Mr. Akgun** (Turkey), speaking on behalf of Turkish youth, welcomed the convening of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and emphasized that achievement of the MDGs and sustainable development had been the focus of debate at the fifth World Youth Congress held in Istanbul in July and August 2010.

52. Given the unprecedented risks posed to humanity by climate change, Turkish youth called for the adoption of concrete measures to address that issue and hoped for the success of the climate-change negotiations.

53. Equally committed to democracy and human rights, Turkish youth had played an important role in the intense process of political reform witnessed in Turkey over the past 10 years.

54. He welcomed the proclamation of 2010 as the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/134; it would draw attention to problems of global concern and disseminate among young people the ideals of peace, prosperity, solidarity and understanding.

55. **Mr. Bame** (Ethiopia) recalled the turning point in development marked 15 years earlier by the World Summit for Social Development when it had identified three priority areas for attention, namely poverty eradication, promotion of full and productive employment, and social integration, and underlined the need to place people at the centre of development.

56. It was regrettable that, despite the headway made towards realizing some of the MDGs, the number of persons living in poverty continued to rise in sub-Saharan Africa. The consequences of multiple global crises, together with those of climate change,

threatened to annihilate much of the progress accomplished in the areas of poverty reduction and social development. Those crises had a profound impact on vulnerable groups, especially women, young people, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and migrants. It was therefore imperative to strengthen global partnerships in order to eliminate poverty and promote full employment and decent and productive work for all.

57. In the interests of providing social protection for disadvantaged groups and stimulating economic growth, the Ethiopian Government had elaborated a number of instruments centred on the human being. The country had experienced seven years of double-digit economic growth and a plan was being implemented in both rural and urban areas with a view to eliminating poverty through accelerated and sustained development. Emphasis was placed on education and public spending was being redirected towards pro-poor investment and programmes aimed at improving health care, education and food security. Strategies and programmes for rural development and job creation had been put in place and measures taken to promote the establishment and expansion of small businesses and microenterprises. An integrated housing development plan had also led to the creation of urban jobs.

58. The Ethiopian Government had taken steps to implement the Madrid International Plan on Ageing, adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, including a 10-year plan of action for older persons. It had also adopted a number of laws and policies to protect and promote the economic, social and cultural rights of persons with disabilities. The Ethiopian Constitution provided that the Government must allocate resources to assist persons with disabilities and children without parents or guardians. Ethiopia had furthermore ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2010.

59. With reference to the report on implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/65/172), he expressed regret that over 72 million children still had no access to primary education, that 759 million persons remained non-literate and that education systems continued to be marked by discrimination against women. Ethiopia had instituted programmes designed to promote education in all sectors of society by devoting significant attention to disadvantaged groups, particularly children not attending school and children in rural areas. In order to progress towards the goal of universal primary education, it had built over 6,000 schools since 1997, 85 per cent of them in rural areas. The construction of a nation demanded investment in education. Responsibility for the achievement of goals in education lay mainly with governments, but stronger international cooperation was needed to overcome the obstacles in that area.

60. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's commitment to the Decent Work Country Programme and its readiness to promote social development.

61. *Mr. Monthe (Cameroon), Chair, took the Chair.*

62. **Mr. Tiendrébéogo** (Burkina Faso) thanked the Secretary-General for his report on implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/65/172) and welcomed all initiatives by the United Nations and its specialized agencies to provide all children, young people and adults with the knowledge and capacities needed to improve their livelihoods and participate fully in the development of their societies.

63. He welcomed the substantial increase in the total adult literacy rate, which ranged from 69 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa to 99 per cent in Central Asia, North America and Western Europe. The goal of education for all, however, would not be reached in 2015, insofar as it would require tremendous efforts at both the national and international levels to make primary education universally accessible, in particular by creating 1.9 million teachers' jobs, including 1.2 million in sub-Saharan Africa.

64. To overcome those challenges, his Government had taken a number of institutional and strategic measures, such as establishing the Fund for Literacy and Non-formal Education in 2002 and adopting a new framework law on education in 2007. The gross school enrolment rate had risen from 45.9 per cent in 2000/01 to 74.8 per cent in 2009/10 and the boy-girl parity index from 0.74 to 0.94. The literacy rate among the population aged 15 years and over was also increasing.

65. Burkina Faso had also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which it had incorporated into its framework law, and its Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy had worked in partnership with various non-governmental

organizations to launch initiatives for promoting the education of children with disabilities.

66. The achievement of goals relating to education for all remained a challenge for many developing countries, in particular least developed countries such as Burkina Faso. The international community must respond promptly by improving coordination and the predictability of aid in the medium and long terms. It must mobilize sufficient resources to overcome the annual deficit of $16 billion, which was the amount needed to fund education for all in low-income countries. His delegation encouraged the United Nations to step up its efforts to fulfil international commitments, notably those made at the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 and the Group of Eight Summit held at Gleneagles in 2005.

67. **Mr. Faizal** (Maldives) thanked the Secretary-General for his comprehensive study on the impact of the converging world crises on social development (A/65/174). Maldives, which depended primarily on tourism and fishing, had been severely affected by the shrinking of those traditional markets. The Government had been compelled to implement austerity measures to cut public spending and undertake massive economic reforms.

68. Increased external debt burden and the higher cost of international borrowing had prevented Maldives from adopting the necessary macroeconomic policies to stave off massive unemployment and move forward with development. Rising unemployment, especially among women and young persons, and religious extremism compromised the progress made, especially in the area of gender parity.

69. Noting the disappointing statistics contained in the Secretary-General's report on the Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/65/172), he said that much still needed to be done in the Maldives region to provide the population with equal access to the basic educational tools they required. The negative implications for the achievement of gender equality in Maldives were great and the costs of marginalizing half of the country's population were incalculable.

70. Maldives welcomed the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report that strong international partnerships should be established to achieve more meaningful gains in the area of literacy efforts and looked forward to forging those partnerships soon.

71. **Mr. Borg** (Malta), addressing the question of ageing and the elderly, said that he welcomed the inclusion of a section entitled "Perception, participation and integration of older persons in society and development" in the Secretary-General's report on follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/65/157). Older people could in fact help to achieve more than half of the Millennium Development Goals.

72. Malta continuously adopted measures to safeguard the well-being of the entire population, from the youngest to the oldest persons, in the field of health and in the social and economic spheres. Life expectancy for males was increasing and had reached 78 years, while that of females was 82 years. Persons aged 60 and over represented a fifth of the population and would represent more than a third by 2050. In addition, women outnumbered men. The percentage of persons aged less than 20 years (22 per cent in 2009) was expected to decrease to 17 per cent by 2050. In 2009, 51 per cent of the total expenditure of the Maltese Government on social benefits went to retirement.

73. To meet the challenges brought about by those demographic trends, the Department of Elderly Care was developing creative, high-quality programmes for elderly persons both in State-owned residences and in their own homes. Malta was strengthening its system of health care and health services offered to the population in order to reduce the likelihood that elderly persons might be marginalized or confined to hospitals or other institutions and to enable them to live a relatively independent life.

74. Realizing that such care required professionally trained personnel, the Department of Elderly Care launched training initiatives and worked closely with the Institute of Health Care, the Department of Gerontology of the University of Malta and the Employment and Training Corporation of Malta as well as with the International Institute on Ageing, which had been so well served by Professor Robert N. Butler, who died on 4 July 2010.

75. In conclusion, he recalled the role played by the elderly in the transition from the past to the present, the country's identity and culture and religion.

76. **Mr. Sankar** (India) said that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, adopted in 1995, had placed people at the centre of development and defined three pillars of social development, namely

poverty eradication; full and productive employment and decent work for all; and social integration, the cornerstone of a stable, safe and just society.

77. India was currently implementing its eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-2012), which was based on growth for all and aimed at enabling the inhabitants of rural areas, who constituted the majority of the Indian population, to benefit directly from the dividends of growth. The questions of gender equality and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized sections of society were also taken into account in India's development efforts. The eleventh Plan not only set a target for growth, but also defined 26 indices for measuring the results that development programmes had achieved in various areas such as poverty, education and health. In 2005 the Indian Government had also adopted a programme for breaking down social inequalities that ensured 100 days of employment for every rural household and had provided employment to 45 million people in 2009, in particular women and members of other marginalized sections of society.

78. Social integration did not imply uniformity, but respect for diversity, the promotion of equal opportunity and participation of all in society. With regard to persons with disabilities, India had passed an act in 1995 under which 3 per cent of vacancies in public administration and educational institutions were reserved for them. The Indian Government also financed rehabilitation programmes and had set up a committee charged with harmonizing national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which it had ratified. Under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, passed in 2009, elementary schooling had become an inalienable right of all children for eight years of their life, from age 6 to 14. In addition, within the framework of its programme of elementary education for all, the country had made commendable progress in the building of school infrastructure, and the experiment had been extended to secondary and higher education. Lastly, India, with nearly 80 million older persons, reaffirmed its commitment to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, adopted in 2002.

79. **Ms. Hernando** (Philippines) recalled that her delegation had previously expressed concern that the strategies implemented by States Members of the United Nations to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goals did not adequately take into account persons with disabilities, who accounted for 10 per cent of the world's population and 80 per cent of whom lived in developing countries. The Philippines thus welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/65/173) and the recommendations contained therein.

80. Being aware that global crises and climate change might create obstacles to the achievement of development goals and seriously penalize persons with disabilities, she recommended that their needs should be taken into account in all aspects — social, political and economic — of national development policies and programmes. Inasmuch as national measures, to be effective, must be complemented by regional and international efforts, she also stressed the importance of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. It was likewise important that the mechanisms for tracking the progress made should clearly point up the needs of persons with disabilities within the overall framework of the allocation of funds and resources at the national, regional and global levels.

81. The Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development must be updated to reflect all the human rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The core component of the revision should include a clear understanding of disability as an evolving concept. The development and use of statistics for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation of progress in achieving internationally agreed goals could best be achieved through collective efforts of all Member States and stakeholders.

82. She invited all Member States to make their contributions and provide their support to the draft resolution entitled "Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond" which her delegation intended to introduce.

83. **Ms. Martínez** (Dominican Republic), speaking on behalf of the youth of her country, said that although the youth were a highly vulnerable demographic group, they were also the cornerstone on which the future of the world rested. The effects of the many difficulties they were currently experiencing, such as high unemployment, environmental degradation, armed conflicts, hunger and lack of education, would be felt by the current and future generations.

84. Most developing countries were striving to overcome colossal obstacles in order to increase school enrolment of children. It was essential to meet the social, economic and political conditions guaranteeing access to education for all and thus contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It was also vital to put in place parallel educational systems to offer education to young people who suffered from various forms of discrimination, in particular young persons with disabilities and members of indigenous peoples or ethnic or linguistic minorities.

85. **Ms. Zapata** (Dominican Republic) said that the unfulfilled promises of cooperation made by developed countries and the burden of foreign debt on the budgets of developing countries had prevented the latter from financing policies and projects that might genuinely improve the lives of their peoples. The United Nations must encourage the establishment of conditions that would promote the development of young people, starting from childhood. Instead of seeking to analyse shortcomings and omissions, efforts should be made finally to eliminate mechanisms for the exclusion of young people and to minimize inequalities.

86. The citizens of today's world should not only integrate themselves into society but also simultaneously participate in the development of society. Young people held the key to human development, sustained economic growth and technological innovation. Governments must therefore guarantee respect for their human rights. In the absence of immediate action on their part, the new generation would take it upon itself to initiate the required transformation. The United Nations should involve young people in the decision-making process and allow their participation in the medium and long terms on a regular — not ad hoc — basis.

87. The International Year of Youth was the ideal time to review government policies on youth and promote youth participation. Young people had the necessary will and capacities; they simply lacked the opportunity to make use of them.

88. **Ms. Juma** (United Republic of Tanzania) said it was vital to recognize that internationally adopted goals, including the MDGs, complemented the commitments made at Copenhagen, which were founded on a human-centred view of development and on the idea of a society from which no one was excluded. Those two notions had been instrumental to the elaboration, implementation and follow-up of policies by her Government, which had notably established a decentralization programme that involved young people in decision-making affecting their development. It had also taken measures to assist vulnerable groups. On that score, her country had co-sponsored a draft resolution, to be introduced by the Philippines, on realizing the MDGs for persons with disabilities.

89. The Tanzanian Government had established a national framework for social protection in order to enhance the coordination and implementation of policies designed to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable persons and persons living in extreme poverty. Poverty nonetheless remained a chief factor in the failure of social integration. The majority of Tanzanians lived in rural areas and it was therefore essential to modernize agriculture in the interests of poverty reduction and job creation. Her Government was consequently making efforts to that end in the context of its programme "Kilimo Kwanza" (Agriculture First). Building on that momentum, it had also reformed land law with a view to giving women access to land ownership and involving them in decision-making.

90. In conclusion, she affirmed that her country was ready to do its utmost to honour the commitments set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. The international community was nonetheless called upon to support it in that endeavour.

91. **Ms. Ivanova** (Bulgaria), speaking on behalf of Bulgarian youth, recalled that Bulgaria had been devoting attention to the problems of young people since the 1980s and that its national programme for youth representatives had developed rapidly during its five years of existence. With respect to the process of elaborating national positions on global matters, she commended both the manner in which cooperation between Bulgarian institutions and the United Nations had been organized and the role played by the Bulgarian media.

92. In the context of globalization, young people were particularly interested in the two interdependent issues of education and employment. Given that youth were the vehicle for social change, economic development and innovation, it was essential to develop and implement policies and programmes that fulfilled their needs. Well aware of the enormous potential of young people, decision-makers were attuned to those needs and sought further to promote youth interests. The International Year of Youth was

one example of efforts to that end, but more must be done. At the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly entitled "We can end poverty: Millennium Development Goals 2015", numerous speakers had recognized that know-how and capacity-building were important for growth. The transition from school to the world of work was, however, increasingly problematic for young people for three main reasons; first, the education system was not sufficiently responsive to the changing needs of the job market; secondly, it was difficult for young people to find a first job that matched their field of study and provided decent conditions of work, as well as a decent salary; and lastly, young people came up against the problem of skills development once they were established in the world of work.

93. Insofar as employment and education were the keys to sustainable growth, all States should devote attention to them. In particular, decision-makers must focus on two interdependent questions: the quality of education and the role of young people in the decision-making process. Education should enable young people to acquire the highest level of knowledge and must be tailored to the job market and the needs of the outside world, in addition to preparing young people for future changes and promoting human values. As to young people themselves, they should be involved not only in decision-making but also in implementing adopted measures. Their participation in the work of international forums should be seen as enrichment and a contribution to the realization of such global strategies as the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the MDGs. The participation of a Bulgarian youth delegation in the work of the General Assembly of the United Nations for the fourth consecutive year fell into that category. Offering as they did a different viewpoint and new ideas, young people could also contribute to the elaboration, implementation and assessment of national policies and action plans in the field of education and to improvement of the education system.

94. Given that today's decisions determined the livelihoods of future generations and that social progress depended on the resources available to young people, investment in youth was vital to ensuring the future of society.

95. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/65/168), said that the failure to achieve the goal of social integration was regrettable; States were primarily intent on protecting certain social groups rather than on implementing a general framework for national and international action. It was also regrettable that nothing had been done to promote economic growth for the benefit of all.

96. Colombia's social policy was focused on poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and the fight against social exclusion. Indeed, it was thanks to its social protection system that 95 per cent of the population were covered by medical insurance, including over half of them under a State-subsidized scheme. Colombia had also established social aid programmes for vulnerable groups; the Families in Action programme, for instance, provided financial assistance to over 2.5 million disadvantaged families, while the JUNTOS Network enabled more than 1.1 million families living in extreme poverty to benefit from social programmes that helped them to take ownership of their development. As to the areas of education and training, which were crucial to social integration, Colombia had already achieved the MDG relating to universal primary education and was currently working to improve the school enrolment rate and the quality of education.

97. The development of a general framework for the promotion of social integration did not, however, preclude a closer interest in groups that were more vulnerable and at risk of discrimination, such as young persons, older persons and persons with disabilities. Young persons were particularly susceptible to socio-economic difficulties, especially unemployment. The Colombian Government had therefore tabled before Congress a bill aimed at stimulating the creation of jobs for young graduates. It had also defined guidelines aimed at guaranteeing the right to education, leisure and health for persons over 62 years of age. Lastly, its policy on persons with disabilities was designed to remove the obstacles to the social integration of such persons, improve their livelihoods and make them more independent.

98. Action at the national level must go hand in hand with international measures for strengthening cooperation, technical assistance and technology transfer. The international community as a whole would benefit if States and international organizations were to accord priority to social investments aimed at combating poverty, inequality and discrimination.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.